

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 4 are amended in response to the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Moreover, the preambles of those claims are amended to provide antecedent basis for “the occupant”, mentioned later in those claims. Claims 3 and 6 are amended in response to the aforementioned indefiniteness rejection. These amendments are submitted to clarify the language of the claims.

Turning to issues of prior art, Claims 1-6 stand rejected as unpatentable over JP 9-99795 in view of *Krickl* (5,454,594). The applicant respectfully traverses this rejection, as possibly applied to the amended claims.


In the airbag defined in amended Claim 1, the lower joining line projects towards the abdomen of the occupant, as described in the specification at line 25 of page 7 to line 1 of page 8. Because a bulging portion is formed at the second rear face portion (shown at 4c in Fig. 3), the occupant is safely protected by the airbag. Claim 4 defines a similar structural and functional arrangement. In Claim 4, the second rear face portion (4c) of the lower base cloth is more extended toward the occupant than the first rear face portion (3c) of the upper base cloth. Since the second rear face portion can approach the abdomen of the occupant, the occupant can be safely protected by the airbag. Contrasting the claimed combination of structural and functional elements with JP ‘795 and *Krickl*, it can be seen that neither reference, singly or in combination, teaches the claimed invention. In particular, JP ‘795

discloses an airbag wherein a middle portion of the rear face projects toward an occupant. However, the whole of the rear face (including not only a lower rear face but also including an upper rear face) projects toward the occupant. This arrangement disclosed by JP '795 is contrary to the combination defined in Claims 1 and 4.

In addition, *Krickl* discloses an airbag 10 including two sheets, the textile web sections 14 and 16. Referring to the sketch 4A submitted by the applicant as part of the First Response herein, it would seem that the lower portion of *Krickl's* airbag would approach a *head* portion of the occupant and would project toward that head portion. One of ordinary skill thus does not find in *Krickl* the direction required to produce an airbag as disclosed and claimed herein, intended to project toward the abdomen of the occupant.

The foregoing is submitted as a complete response to the Office Action identified above. The applicant submits that all claims in this application now are in condition for allowance and solicits a notice to that affect.

Respectfully submitted,



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Version with Markings to Show Changes Made

Amendments in the Claims

In accordance with 37 C.F.R. 1.121(c) the following version of the claims as rewritten by the foregoing amendment shows all the changes made relative to the previous version of the claim.

1. (Twice Amended) An airbag intended to protect an occupant of a vehicle in which the airbag is employed, the airbag formed by joining two base cloths constituting an upper piece and a lower piece to form a substantially closed [box] concave shape, comprising:

an upper base cloth having a first rear face portion opposed to an occupant of a vehicle in an inflated state of the airbag, an upper face portion continuously and substantially perpendicularly disposed with the first rear face portion, and two first side portions each connected to the first rear face portion and the upper face portion so that the upper piece is formed in a generally box shape, wherein the upper piece comprises an upper joining line defined between the first rear face portion and the first side portion;

a lower base cloth having a second rear face portion opposed to the occupant in the inflated state of the airbag, a lower face portion continuously and substantially perpendicularly disposed with the second rear face portion, and two second side portions each connected to the second rear face portion and the lower face portion so that the lower piece is formed in the generally box shape, wherein the lower piece comprises a lower joining line defined between the second rear face portion and the second side portion; and

wherein [only] the lower joining line [among the upper joining line and the lower joining line] is smoothly curved in such a manner that a middle portion of the lower joining line projects toward an abdomen of the occupant, thereby forming a bulging portion at the second rear face portion.

3. (Amended) An airbag according to Claim 1,

wherein the lower joining line has a plurality of arc shape portions in which each adjacent two arc shape portions have different [radius] radii and join smoothly with each other.

4. (Twice Amended) An airbag intended to protect an occupant of a vehicle in which the airbag is employed, the airbag formed by joining two base cloths constituting an upper piece and a lower piece to form a substantially closed [box] concave shape, comprising:

an upper base cloth having a first rear face portion opposed to an occupant of a vehicle in an inflated state of the airbag, an upper face portion continuously and substantially perpendicularly disposed with the first rear face portion, and two first side portions each connected to the first rear face portion and the upper face portion so that the upper piece is formed in generally box like shape, wherein the upper piece comprises an upper joining line [defined] defined between the first rear face portion and the first side portion;

a lower base cloth having a second rear face portion opposed to the occupant in the inflated state of the airbag, a lower face portion continuously and substantially

perpendicularly disposed with the second rear face portion, and two second side portions each connected to the second rear face portion and the lower face portion so that the lower piece is formed in the generally box shape, wherein the lower piece comprises a lower joining line defined between the second rear face portion and the second side portion; and

wherein the [only] lower joining line [among the upper joining line and the lower joining line] is smoothly projected outwardly in its middle portion, thereby forming a bulging portion at the second rear face portion of the lower base cloth, so that the second rear face portion of the lower base cloth is more extended toward the occupant than the first rear face portion of the [lower] upper base cloth, thereby approaching the abdomen of the occupant.

6. (Amended) An airbag according to Claim 4,

wherein the lower joining line has a plurality of arc shape portions in which each adjacent two arc shape portions have different [radius] radii and join smoothly with each other.